



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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For Immediate Release:  
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**(Erratum – Corrected Version to Replace Quarterly Report Released May 19, 2006)**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT ON INFORMAL CONSUMER INQUIRIES AND**  
**COMPLAINTS RELEASED**

Washington, DC – The Commission has released its report on the top five subject areas for inquiries and complaints processed by the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) during the first quarter of calendar year 2006.

Wireless complaints decreased from 4,956 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 4,616 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. There were decreases in each of the Wireless categories. Wireline complaint receipts increased from 21,726 to 23,358.

The number of Radio and Television Broadcasting complaints significantly increased from 44,287 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 275,257 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. The biggest increase occurred in the Obscenity/Indecency/Profanity category, from 44,109 to 275,131. Cable and Satellite Services complaints increased from 225 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 290 in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. There were increases in each of the categories, except Cable Modem Service Issues.

There was a decline in the number of Wireless inquiries received during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter as they fell from 9,246 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 7,130 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Commercial License Issues replaced Tower Issues as one of the top Wireless inquiry categories this quarter. Wireline inquiries increased from 27,549 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 31,231 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Radio and Television Broadcasting inquiry receipts increased from 3,390 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 4,238 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Cable and Satellite Services inquiries increased from 3,953 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 4,189 in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. There were increases in each of the top categories, except Service-Related Issues.

The Commission receives many inquiries and complaints that do not involve violations of the Communications Act, or a rule or order of the Commission. The existence of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the company at issue.

CGB contact: Mary Beth Richards at (202) 418-1400.

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# **REPORT ON INFORMAL CONSUMER INQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS**

## **1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Calendar Year 2006**

### **Executive Summary**

This report tracks the top five subject areas for consumer inquiries and complaints processed by the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) received during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of calendar year 2006.<sup>1</sup> Inquiries are defined as correspondence or communications received at the Commission from individuals seeking information on matters under the FCC's jurisdiction. Informal consumer complaints are defined as a communication received at CGB's consumer centers either via postal mail, fax, email, internet, or telephone from or on behalf of an individual that: (i) identifies a particular entity under the FCC's jurisdiction; (ii) alleges harm or injury; and (iii) seeks relief.

Wireless complaints decreased from 4,956 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 4,616 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. There were decreases in each of the Wireless categories. Wireline complaint receipts increased from 21,726 to 23,358.

The number of Radio and Television Broadcasting complaints significantly increased from 44,287 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 275,257 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. The biggest increase occurred in the Obscenity/Indecency/Profanity category, from 44,109 to 275,131. Cable and Satellite Services complaints increased from 225 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 290 in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. There were increases in each of the categories, except Cable Modem Service Issues.

There was a decline in the number of Wireless inquiries received during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter as they fell from 9,246 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 7,130 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Commercial License Issues replaced Tower Issues as one of the top Wireless inquiry categories this quarter. Wireline inquiries increased from 27,549 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 31,231 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Radio and Television Broadcasting inquiry receipts increased from 3,390 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 4,238 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Cable and Satellite Services inquiries increased from 3,953 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 4,189 in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. There were increases in each of the top categories, except Service-Related Issues.

The Commission receives many inquiries and informal complaints that do not involve violations of the Communications Act, or a rule or order of the Commission. The existence of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the company or companies at issue.

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<sup>1</sup> The data reported reflect the complaints and inquiries recorded in CGB's automated tracking systems for the period January 1, 2006 to March 31, 2006. The information generated for this specific report is information entered into the tracking systems on or before a specific date. In addition, the data within this report account for statistics at the national level as reported to the Commission and, therefore, are not necessarily indicative of corresponding state or local trends.

## **Top Consumer Issues – Subject Category Reference Guide**

### **CABLE & SATELLITE SERVICES**

**Accessibility Issues:** Complaints/inquiries regarding video description, closed captioning, and emergency access to video programming

**Billing & Rates:** Complaints/inquiries concerning billing matters and the rates charged for cable programming service (or expanded basic) tier on a cable system or satellite services

**Cable Modem Service:** Complaints/inquiries regarding cable modem service

**Connections to Cable Systems:** Complaints/inquiries regarding availability or quality of connections to cable systems

**Over-The-Air-Reception-Devices (OTARD) Issues:** Complaints/inquiries regarding the installation, maintenance or use of antennas -- including direct-to-home satellite dishes that are less than one meter (39.37") in diameter (or of any size in Alaska), TV antennas, and wireless cable antennas -- to receive video programming

**Programming Issues:** Complaints/inquiries regarding program content or the choice of channels or programs available to subscribers

**Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act (SHVIA):** Complaints/inquiries regarding SHVIA issues

**Service Related Issues:** Complaints/inquiries about the quality of service provided by cable operators or satellite programming distributors

### **RADIO & TELEVISION BROADCASTING**

**Accessibility Issues:** Complaints/inquiries regarding video description, closed captioning, and emergency access to video programming

**Commercial Advertisement Issues:** Complaints/inquiries regarding commercial advertisements

**General Broadcast Information:** Inquiries regarding general broadcast requirements, licenses, and community obligations

**How to Start Broadcast Station:** Inquiries regarding starting a broadcast station

## **Programming Issues**

- Obscenity/ Indecency/Profanity: Complaints/inquiries regarding programs that allegedly contain obscene, indecent or profane material
- Loud Commercials: Complaints/inquiries regarding abrupt changes in volume during transition from regular programming to commercials
- Religious: Complaints/inquiries regarding religious programs
- Violence: Complaints/inquiries regarding violence in programs
- General Content Criticism: generalized concerns regarding the content of programs

## **WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Amateur License Issue:** Inquiries regarding Amateur license acquisition, requirements, eligibility, and replacement

### **Billing and Rates-Related – Includes the Following Subcategories:**

**Billing/Rates - Airtime Charges:** Complaints/inquiries regarding charges to subscriber for actual time spent talking on a wireless phone

**Billing/Rates-Credit/Refunds/Adjustments:** Complaints/inquiries regarding credits, refunds, or bill adjustments

**Billing/Rates - Line Items:** complaints/inquiries regarding surcharges and taxes appearing on a phone bill

- Access Charge: Complaints/inquiries regarding miscellaneous line items charges
- E-911: Complaints/inquiries regarding provision of automatic location information and automatic number identification via a wireless phone used to contact a 911 call center
- Taxes: Complaints/inquiries regarding taxes appearing on cellular bill
- Universal Service: Complaints/inquiries about the availability and affordability of phone service for low income consumers in geographic areas where the costs of providing telephone service is high

**Billing/Rates – Recurring Charges:** Complaints/inquiries over recurring monthly charges that appear on a customer's bill

**Billing/Rates – Roaming Rates:** Complaints/inquiries about charges assessed to the subscriber for wireless calls made while roaming in another carrier's territory

**Billing/Rates – Rounding:** Complaints/inquiries about the practice of rounding calls to a full minute

**Billing/Rates – Service Plan Rate:** Complaints/inquiries about the terms and conditions of service:

- Activation Fee: usually one time charge to initiate service
- Off-Peak: specified time where per-minute rate is lower

- Optional Services: including caller-id, voice mail, road-rescue, etc.
- Peak: specified time where per-minute rate is higher
- Prepaid Service: subscriber pays for service in advance
- Promo Plan: including minute allowances
- Security Deposit: usually one time charge that is held by the carrier for a specified timeframe in order for subscriber to acquire service

**Carrier Marketing & Advertising:** Complaints/inquiries regarding advertising and marketing practices of carriers including alleged misrepresentations

**Commercial License Issues:** Inquiries regarding commercial licenses.

**Contract – Early Termination:** Complaints/inquiries regarding termination of a subscriber's service prior to end of specified contract term

- Termination of Service by subscriber: subscriber's liability for terminating service prior to specified contract term
- Termination of Service by carrier: carrier's right to disconnect a subscriber's service prior to end of a specified contract term

**Electrical Interference Issue:** Inquiries regarding unwanted signals from nearby transmitters to home entertainment electronic equipment

**General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) License Issue:** Inquiries regarding GMRS license acquisition, requirements, eligibility, and replacement

**Land Mobile (LM) License Issue:** Inquiries regarding LM license acquisition, requirements, eligibility, and replacement

**Service – Quality/Coverage:** Complaints/inquiries regarding quality of service or the lack of coverage within a geographic area served by a wireless provider:

- Dead Spots: inability to receive service within certain areas
- Dropped Calls: premature termination of calls
- Home Area Service: overall quality of service within the subscriber's local calling area
- Network Busy Signal: involving calls that do not go through because of overcrowding of the service frequencies
- Roaming Availability: availability of service outside the subscriber's local calling area
- Roaming Service: overall quality of service while roaming
- Service Interruption: inability to use cellular phone because service was interrupted by service provider

## **WIRELINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

### **Billing and Rates-Related – Includes the Following Subcategories:**

**Billing/Rates Credit/Refunds/Adjustments:** Complaints/inquiries about credits, refunds, or adjustments allegedly owed to the subscriber

**Billing/Rates – Line Item:** Complaints/inquiries about the line items appearing on telephone bills:

- Access – Subscriber Line Charge: questions regarding subscriber local-loop line charges for maintaining residential and business and telephone access to the network
- Access – Universal Service: questions regarding the FCC’s universal service fund-affordable access to basic telephone service for low-income consumers and consumers in high-cost areas, and communications services for schools and libraries and health care facilities
- Interstate Directory Assistance: questions about charges assessed for access to directory assistance information
- Taxes on Telephone Bill: questions about local, state, or federal taxes appearing on a telephone bill
- Truth in Billing - No Service Provider ID: Complaints/inquiries about whether the name of the service provider and/or contact information for the service provider is easily identifiable on the bill
- Truth in Billing - Bundled Charges: Complaints/inquiries about whether bills contain plain language description and breakdown of charges for each carrier when multiple carriers appear on the bill
- Truth in Billing - No Payment Solution: Complaints/inquiries about whether a bill clearly distinguishes charges for which nonpayment will result in disconnection from those that will not result in disconnection

**Billing/Rates – Rates:** Miscellaneous complaints/inquiries about the rates and charges billed by telephone companies:

- Casual Call Billing: rates billed for calls placed from non-public phones through a carrier who is not the presubscribed carrier for the telephone (or which does not recognize a telephone number as that of a subscriber)
- Double Billing: dispute involving alleged double billing for calls or services
- DSL Rate Problem: DSL promotion plan rates allegedly altered or unspecified to consumer
- International Internet Dial-up: international calls (routed to places like Chad, Madagascar or other countries) that were billed to consumers as a result of using local (domestic) Internet service providers to access websites
- International Calls – Rates: international calls, rates and/or service that either originate or terminate in the U.S.
- International 809# Billing: 809 area code collect call and consumer dialing scam

- 900 Pay-Per-Call Billing: commercially provided interstate 900 number information or entertainment services
- OSP Rates: rates charged for interstate calls placed from public phones
- Rates for Interstate Telecommunications Services – Billing: disputes about interstate rates and charges

**Billing/Rates – Recurring Charges**: Complaints/inquiries about recurring charges that appear on a customer's bill

**Cramming**: Complaints/inquiries about allegedly unauthorized, misleading, or deceptive charges appearing on a telephone bill

**Digital Service Line (DSL) Issues**: Complaints/inquiries regarding DSL issues

**Service Quality**: Complaints/inquiries regarding the quality of service provided by telephone companies:

- DSL Service Inadequate: poor quality of service or service outage
- Interstate Telecommunications: poor call reception, service outage, service disconnects, or carrier's failure to release telephone line (and no charges are associated)
- Long Distance Service Treatment: inadequate customer service treatment by long distance carrier including, but not limited to, additional services being added without the consumer's knowledge or approval, etc.

**Slamming**: Complaints/inquiries regarding the practice of changing a subscriber's telecommunications service provider (or a calling plan) without the subscriber's permission

- International slam: changing a subscriber's international long distance service without permission
- Local Service slammed: changing a subscriber's local or regional intrastate long distance service without permission
- Local and Long Distance slammed: changing a subscriber's local and long distance service without permission
- Long Distance slammed: changing a subscriber's interstate telephone company service without permission
- Slamming w/Problem LOA: changing a subscriber's interstate telephone company based on fraudulent signed documents or illegal format, such as sweepstake

**Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA)**: Complaints/inquiries regarding compliance with the TCPA:

- Artificial or Prerecorded Message and/or ATDS: calls to a residence using an artificial or prerecorded voice to deliver a message without prior consent of the called party prohibited unless an emergency exists

- Do Not Call List Request Not Honored: no person or entity may initiate any telephone solicitation to a residential telephone subscriber, unless such person or entity has instituted procedures for maintaining a list of persons who have requested not to receive telephone solicitations
- Fax Complaint: unsolicited (“junk”) faxes or the use of a computer or other device to send any messages via a telephone facsimile prohibited unless such message clearly contains the date and time it is sent and an identification of the business, other entity or individual sending the message
- TCPA General Solicitations: the initiation of a call or message for the purpose of encouraging the purchase or rental of, or investment in property, goods, or services
- Time of Day violation: no person or entity may initiate any telephone solicitation to a residential telephone subscriber before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m. (local time based on the called party’s location)



**Summary of Top Consumer Complaint\* Subjects**  
**Processed by the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB)**  
**First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**

	January	February	March	Quarter Total
<b>Cable &amp; Satellite Services</b>				
Accessibility Issues	37	27	18	82
Billing & Rates	25	24	29	78
Cable Modem Service	10	12	12	34
Programming Issues	13	7	8	28
Service Related Issues	24	19	25	68
<i>Totals</i>	109	89	92	290

	January	February	March	Quarter Total
<b>Radio &amp; Television Broadcasting</b>				
Accessibility Issues	18	26	8	52
Programming - General Criticism	18	14	15	47
Programming - Obscenity/Indecency/Profanity**	1,739	138,527	134,865	275,131
Other Programming Issues	23	2	2	27
<i>Totals</i>	1,798	138,569	134,890	275,257

	January	February	March	Quarter Total
<b>Wireless Telecommunications</b>				
Billing & Rates	898	747	795	2,440
Carrier Marketing & Advertising	196	176	182	554
Contract - Early Termination	213	205	204	622
Equipment	103	98	115	316
Service Quality	245	207	232	684
<i>Totals</i>	1,655	1,433	1,528	4,616

	January	February	March	Quarter Total
<b>Wireline Telecommunications</b>				
Billing & Rates	831	785	894	2,510
Service Quality	275	249	232	756
Slamming	160	99	108	367
Telephone Consumer Protection Act - Other Issues	1,926	2,054	1,366	5,346
Telephone Consumer Protection Act - Unsolicited Fax	6,204	4,696	3,479	14,379
<i>Totals</i>	9,396	7,883	6,079	23,358

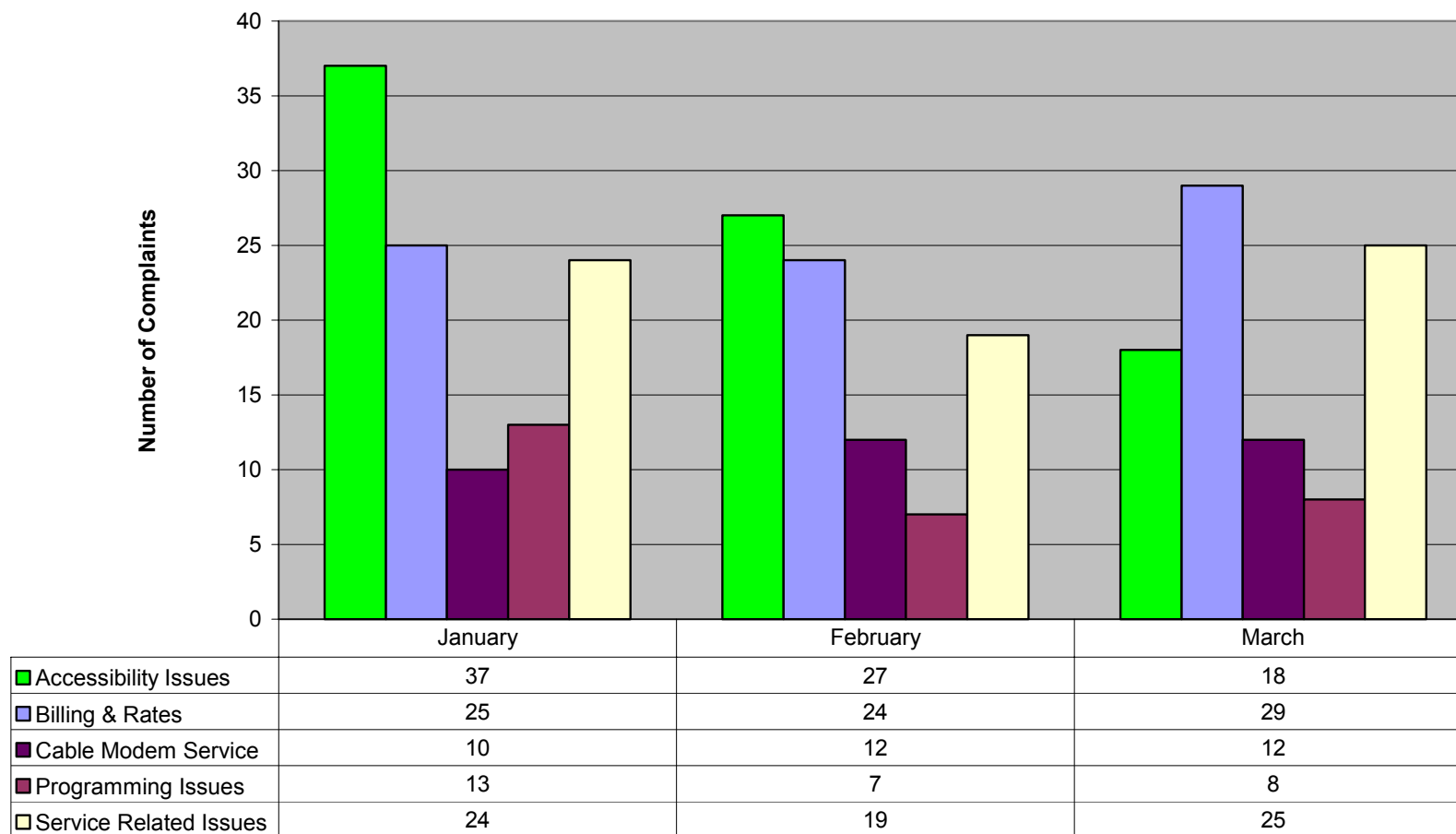
**NOTES:** (1) See attachment for brief description of subject categories.

\* A complaint is defined as a communication received at CGB's consumer center either via letter, fax, email, internet, or telephone from or on behalf of an individual that: (i) identifies a particular entity under the FCC's jurisdiction; (ii) alleges harm or injury; and (iii) seeks relief. The FCC receives many complaints that do not involve violations of the Communications Act or a FCC rule or order. The existence of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the company involved.

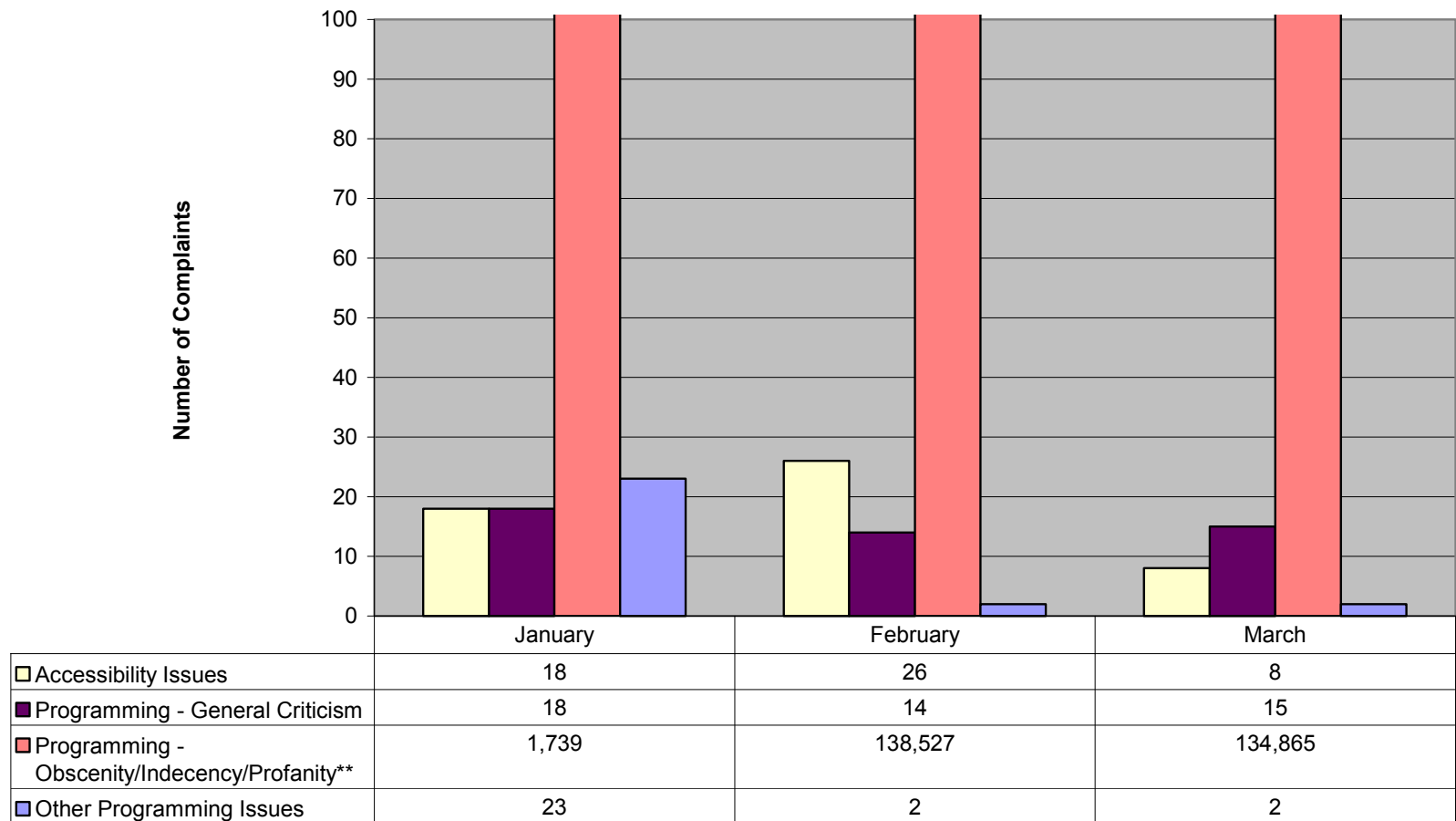
\*\* Complaints regarding alleged obscenity/indecency/profanity during specific programs are forwarded to the Enforcement Bureau (EB) for appropriate handling. The reported counts reflect complaints received by CGB, complaints received separately by EB, and complaints emailed directly to the offices of the FCC Chairman and the respective offices of the Commissioners. The reported counts may also include duplicate complaints or contacts that subsequently are determined insufficient to constitute actionable complaints.

The data within this report account for statistics at the national level as reported to the Commission, and therefore are not necessarily indicative of corresponding state or local trends. The report does not reflect the overall "total" of complaints or inquiries received during this period.

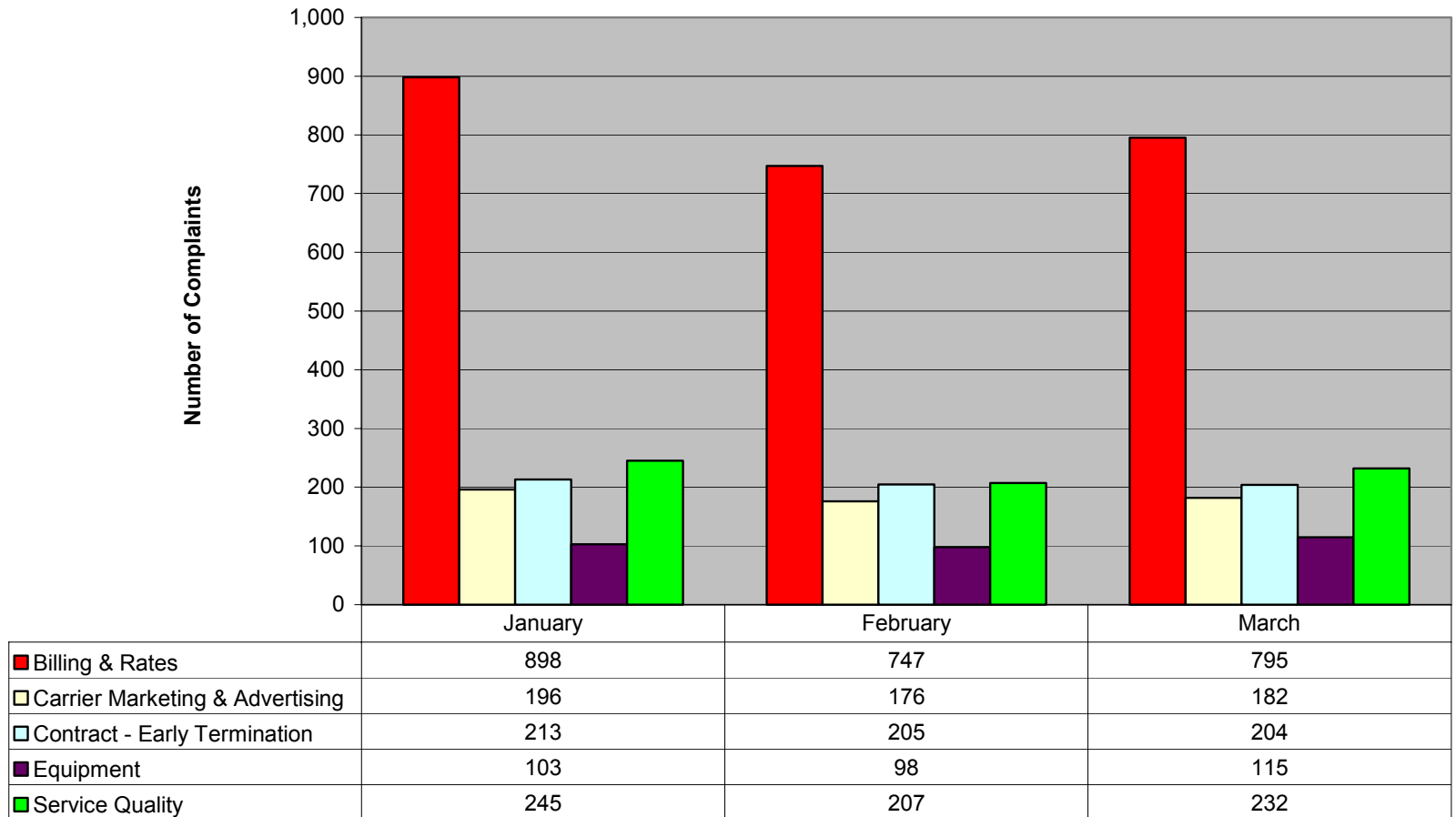
**Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Top Cable Service Consumer Complaints  
First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**



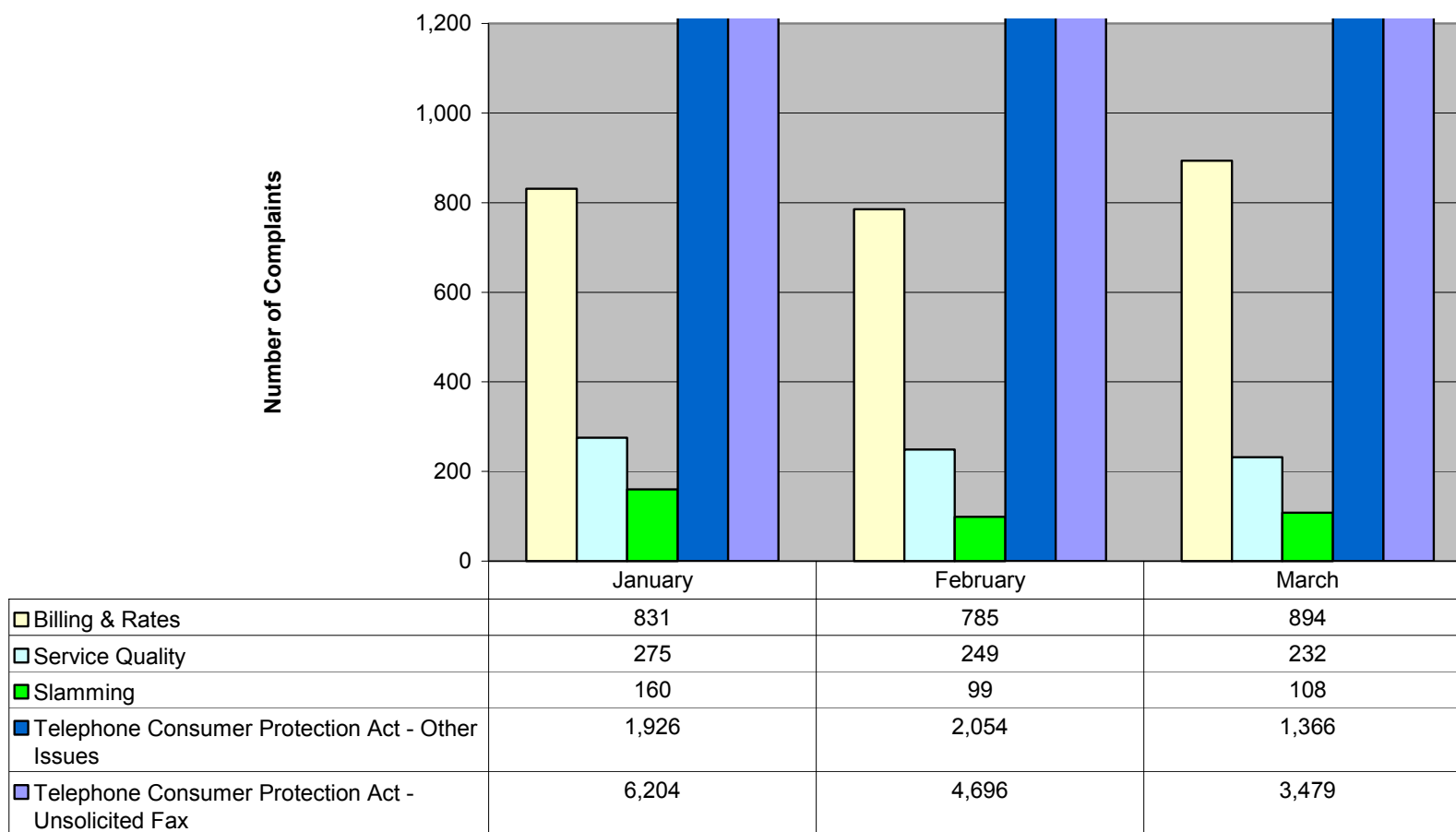
**Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Top Radio & Television Broadcasting Consumer Complaints  
First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**



**Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Top Wireless Telecommunications Consumer Complaints  
First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**



**Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Top Wireline Telecommunications Consumer Complaints  
First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**



**Summary of Top Consumer Inquiry\* Subjects**  
**Processed by the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB)**  
**First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**

	January	February	March	Quarter Total
<b>Cable &amp; Satellite Services</b>				
Over the Air Reception Device Issues	155	208	226	589
Programming Issues	192	133	148	473
Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act Issues	216	184	166	566
Satellite Issues	384	339	389	1,112
Service-Related Issues	565	407	477	1,449
<i>Totals</i>	1,512	1,271	1,406	4,189

	January	February	March	Quarter Total
<b>Radio &amp; Television Broadcasting</b>				
Accessibility Issues	268	131	122	521
Commercial Advertisement Issues	157	128	122	407
General Broadcast Information	178	156	162	496
How to Start Broadcast Station	140	120	142	402
Programming & Content	677	864	871	2,412
<i>Totals</i>	1,420	1,399	1,419	4,238

	January	February	March	Quarter Total
<b>Wireless Telecommunications</b>				
Amateur License	567	280	506	1,353
Commercial Radio License	155	147	147	449
Electrical Interference	1,495	347	1,335	3,177
General Mobile Radio Service License	653	514	568	1,735
Land Mobile License	188	76	152	416
<i>Totals</i>	3,058	1,364	2,708	7,130

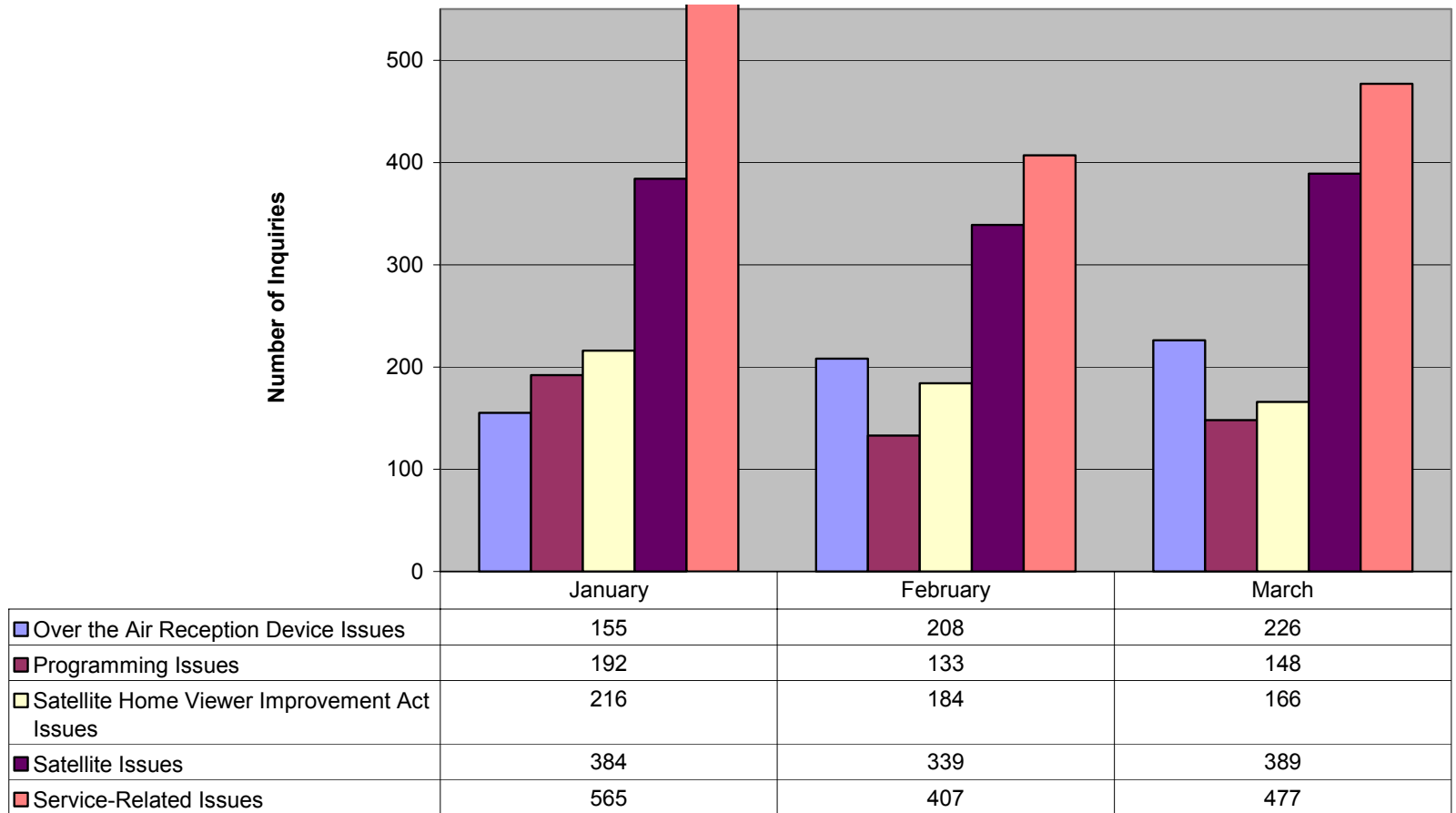
	January	February	March	Quarter Total
<b>Wireline Telecommunications</b>				
Billing & Rates	906	613	951	2,470
Cramming	1,493	523	1,494	3,510
Slamming	1,953	982	1,668	4,603
Telephone Consumer Protection Act - Other Issues	4,926	3,282	4,530	12,738
Telephone Consumer Protection Act - Unsolicited Fax	3,882	2,514	1,514	7,910
<i>Totals</i>	13,160	7,914	10,157	31,231

**NOTES:**

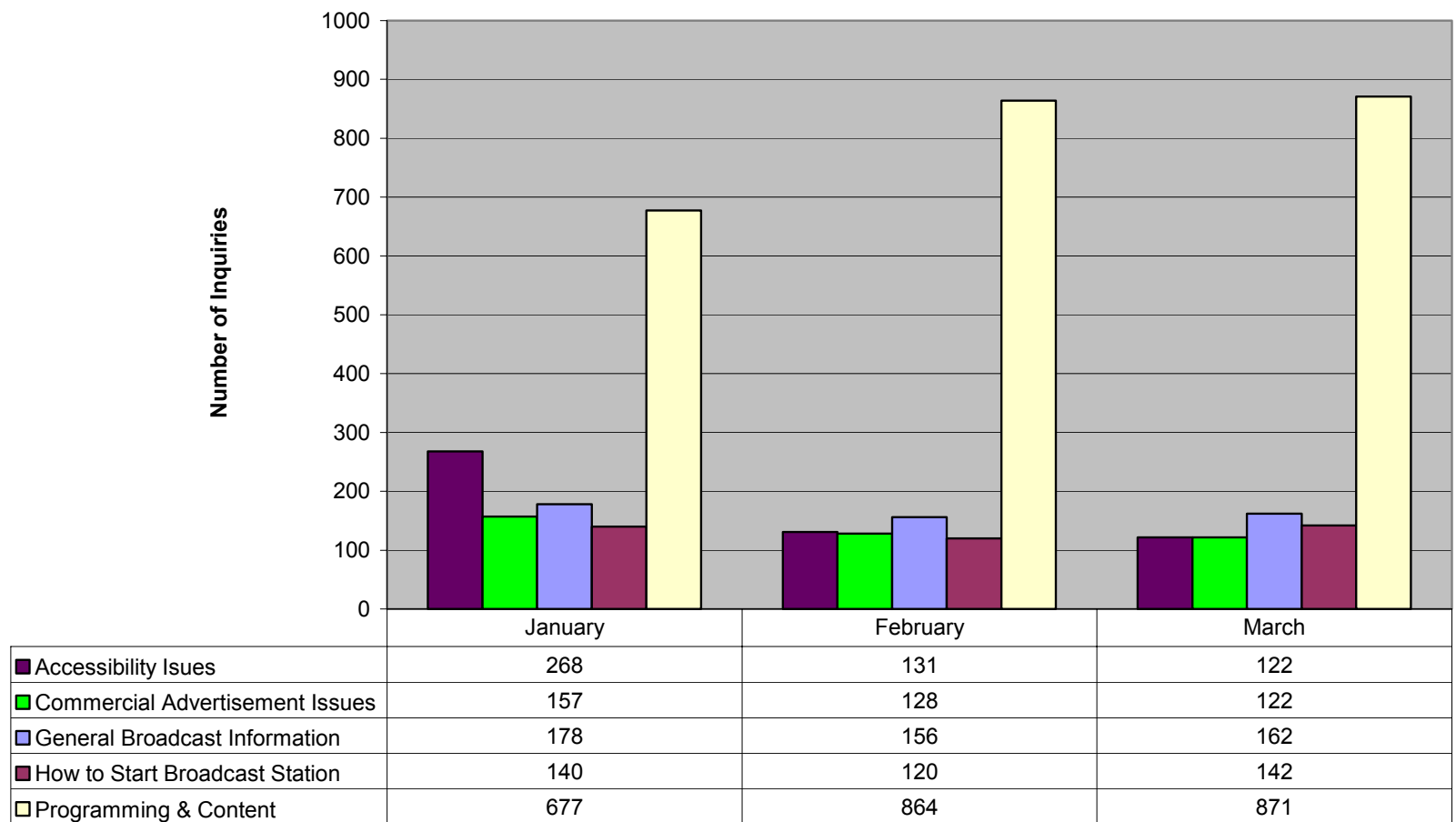
\* An inquiry is defined as a correspondence received at CGB's consumer center either via letter, fax, email, internet, or telephone from individuals seeking information on matters under the FCC's jurisdiction.

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**Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Top Cable Service Consumer Inquiries  
First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**

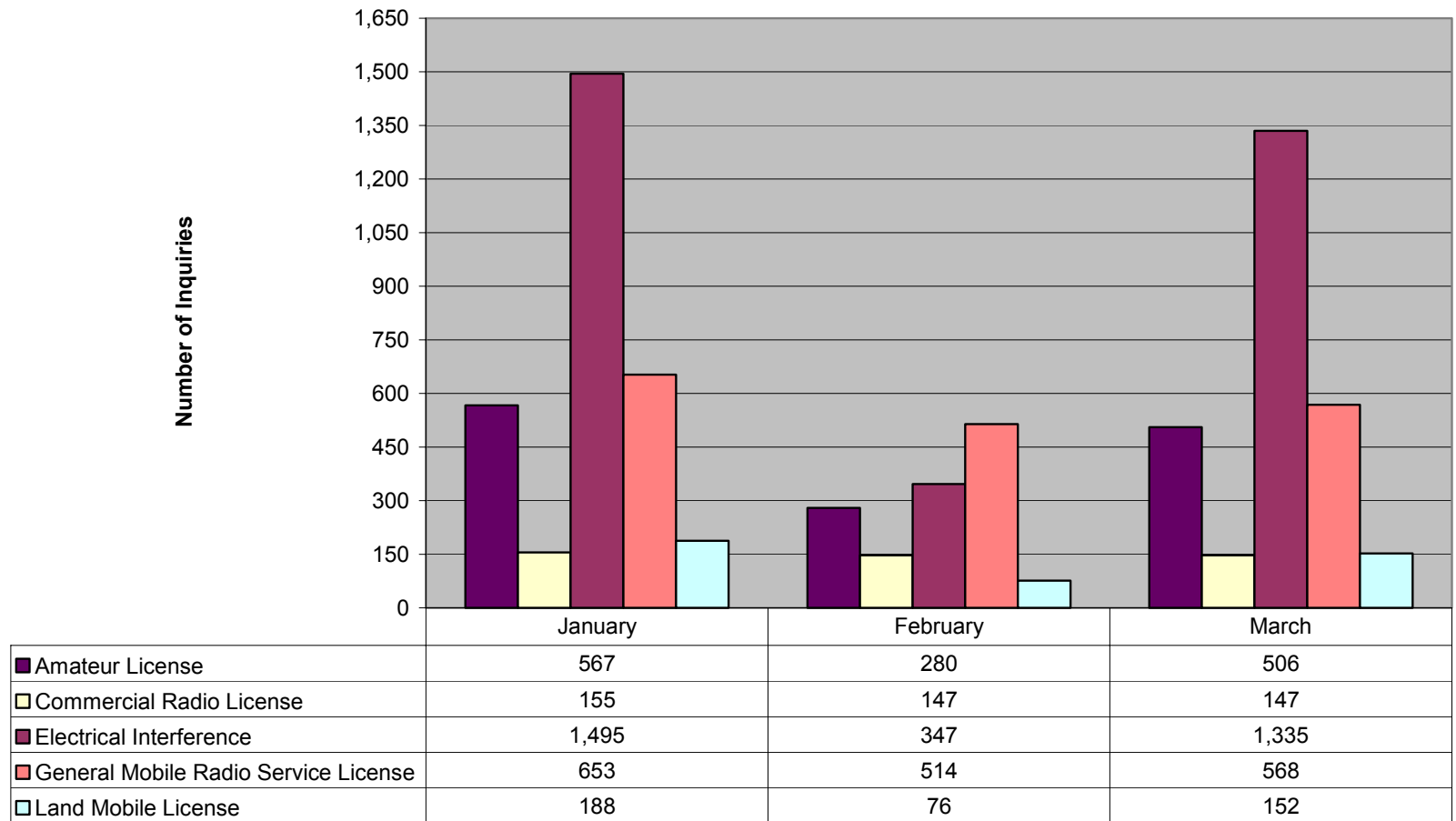


**Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Top Radio & Television Broadcasting Inquiries  
First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**

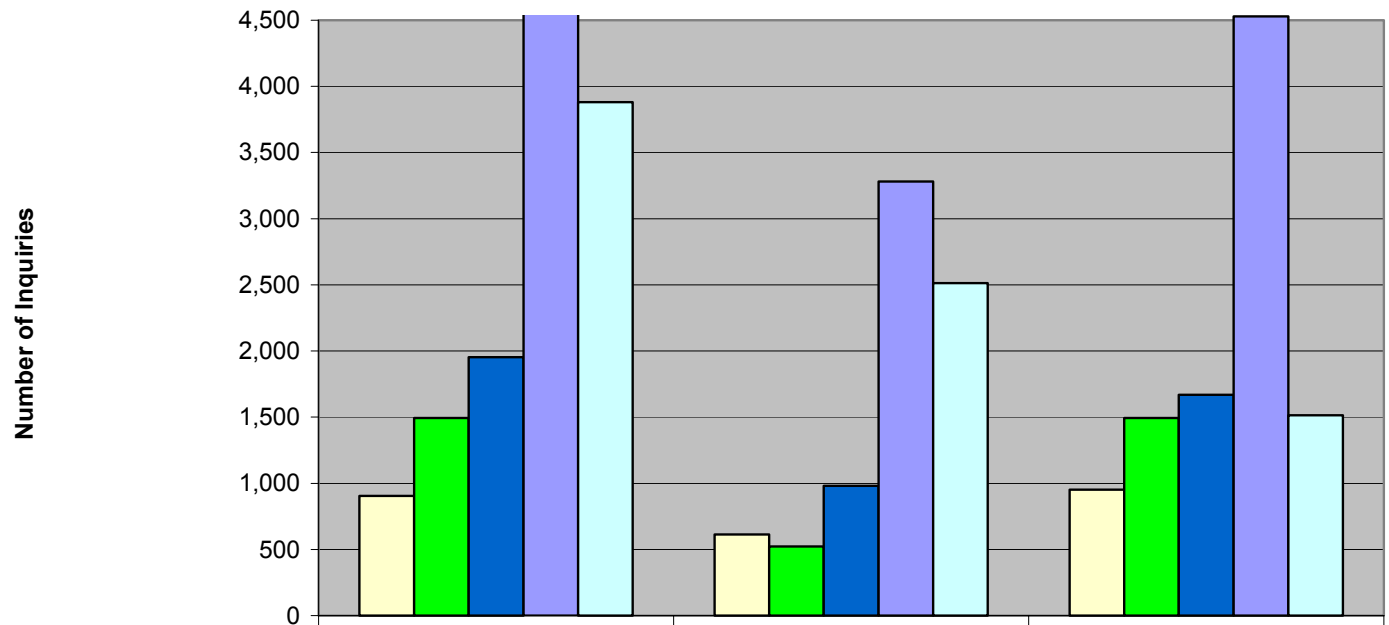




**Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Top Wireless Telecommunications Consumer Inquiries  
First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**



**Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Top Wireline Telecommunications Consumer Inquiries  
First Quarter - Calendar Year 2006**



	January	February	March
Billing & Rates	906	613	951
Cramming	1,493	523	1,494
Slamming	1,953	982	1,668
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Telephone Consumer Protection Act - Unsolicited Fax	3,882	2,514	1,514